

Dear Ms. Osten, Mr. Formica, & Ms. Walker:

I am Tracy Kochey from Berlin. I have a son who attends CREC Montessori Magnet in Hartford. I am writing to ask you to please continue the funding support for our magnet schools.

Thank you for your past funding support for our magnet schools in Connecticut. My son benefits greatly through the extraordinary opportunity he experiences every day at Montessori Magnet. This diverse and engaging learning environment allows my son to thrive in reading, mathematics, and practical life studies. Additionally, I know that my son learns better and is more prepared for the real world as a result of working alongside other students from diverse backgrounds.

My son has benefited from CREC schools in numerous ways. At the preschool level, my son is advancing in mathematics. By using the number chains, he is already learning multiplication. He is able to sound out words and is starting to read signs along the road while we drive to school. Practical life is my favorite portion of the Montessori curriculum. My son loves sweeping and cleaning dishes. He is learning to cook in the classroom. On Wednesday the class will be making bread! The students learn that the classroom is theirs and that they need to pick up and clean the room. He is also learning how to write in cursive unlike most schools in Connecticut.

In these tight budget times, it saddens me that our magnet schools are at risk. Without sustainable funding, CREC which operates seventeen of these innovative schools, will be forced to either cut programming or to increase the costs they charge to local school districts. Please don't force our local districts and our magnet schools to compete with each other for funding! All children deserve a high level of education despite their zip code. CREC is providing education at these high standards for both Suburban students and Hartford students.

If you would like to listen to a wonderful podcast based on integration, [This American Life, episode 563: The Problem We All Live With-Part Two](#), describes what a wonderful program we have with our current Magnet School Program. I understand that Hartford does need to do more integration to include all students, but right now the CREC Magnet Schools are fulfilling fair integration for all students. Parents from Suburban towns are signing their children up for an education that is very different from what is offered at their own public schools.

Due to cuts and years of no increase in budget, our PTA supplied books for our library last year. We were only able to do this because we had won a large sum of money from a box tops submission. It is cuts like this that sadden me. Most recently, our PTA was asked to fund dish and laundry soap for the classrooms. These continued cuts force our PTA to use our fundraising funds for much needed supplies for the school. The purpose of the PTA is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for our children. The purpose of the PTA is not to cover all the cuts that the state has made towards our school.

I am asking the legislature to follow through on its promise to invest in the future of *all* students. Magnet schools have a successful track record of closing the achievement gap and providing all students a chance not only to succeed but also to thrive. Currently the State Board is considering adding more Charter Schools. Before you add any more schools, please adequately fund those that you have established and that are thriving. I urge you to continue funding the schools that are already

operating and available and have demonstrated success before you consider funding new school choice options.

Thank you for reading my letter. Please reply and share with me how you will ensure that my child's school's funding will remain in place. I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tracy Kochey